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By: Kent Casson

Lincoln or Strevell – Who was Taller?

Strevell House now on National Register of Historic Places

Pontiac's connection to Abraham Lincoln was celebrated during a special event to mark the Strevell House being added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Dale Maley of the Livingston County Historical Society, and a local historian, was successful in getting the home added to the register as he researched and even wrote a book about it.

"I took that information in the fall and started the process to get it on the National Register," recalled Maley.

The many different people involved with the restoration were on hand for Saturday's celebration. Tom Ewing, Collins Miller and Donovan Gardner purchased the house several years ago with the intent of refurbishing it and giving it to the Historical Society. Gardner has since passed away but his wife, Carol, was at the ceremony.

In 2008, the home was about to be demolished after it went through several owners and fell into poor shape just before the men bought it.

"It took 10 years to renovate it because they had to raise money as they went," noted Maley.

Most of the activity took place in recent years as city crews were sent in to assist with the project along with representatives from Enbridge who helped with electrical service and heating.

State Senator Tom Bennett even issued a proclamation from the state legislature about the historic home. "The Illinois State Senate and State Senator Tom Bennett acknowledge the Strevell House," the proclamation reads. "It's with honor and a lot of honor that this certificate be presented in recognition of the Strevell House in Pontiac for being accepted to the National Register of Historic Places."

The story behind the house stems from Abraham Lincoln's friendship with local attorney Jason W. Strevell, who was involved in his legal practice at Pontiac for 24 years.

Strevell served as a Republican in the Illinois House of Representatives and served one term as a Senator.

On a January evening in 1860, Lincoln went to the Strevell house to spend the night after speaking to the Pontiac Young Men's Literary Society. Strevell and Lincoln reportedly discussed politics, slavery and other issues from the time.

Strevell was six feet tall and did not believe Lincoln was four inches taller so Lincoln stood in a doorway while Strevell made a scratch in the door frame to mark Lincoln's height. Lincoln was exactly 6 feet, 4 inches tall.



Saturday's ceremony was held inside the Strevell House's meeting room due to the rain.

PHOTOS BY KENT CASSON



The Strevell House in Pontiac.

